

and failed trickle-down economics over investing in a stronger, healthier America. Large numbers of unhealthy and uninsured Americans are not reflective of the governing bodies that make good choices.

The Republican health plan directly slashes funding for people with disabilities by \$12 billion, cutting the program that helps people live in their communities and reach their full potential.

□ 1045

I represent a historically underserved constituency in Alabama's Seventh Congressional District. The median income in my district is less than \$34,000. The majority of the health providers in my district have a patient population that is disproportionately dependent on Medicare and Medicaid and is uninsured. These healthcare providers cannot withstand caps to Medicaid or increases in their uninsured population. If this bill is implemented without substantial changes, rural health care will be lost and rural lives will be at risk.

In my district, I have met constituents who have weekly made choices between whether to buy medicine or to put food on the table. I have a pediatrician in my district in Birmingham who will stop what she is doing to track down patients newly infected with STDs so they do not transmit it.

In States with so many high rates of STDs in this country, every attempt to curb the spread of disease is critical. The GOP bill guts the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which helps community doctors provide preventative care and reduce the threat of public health crises.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, my office has received over 600 emails from constituents about health care. Many shared positive stories about the Affordable Care Act. Others, particularly those from low-income areas, fall in that gap, that Medicaid gap; and the State of Alabama, like so many Republican-led States, did not choose to expand Medicaid.

Unfortunately, the GOP health bill is not the answer. This bill will take Medicaid away from America's children, working parents, and seniors in nursing homes. By 2026, nearly 30 percent of Americans aged 50 to 64 earning \$30,000 will be uninsured. Surely, Mr. Speaker, this is not what this body intended.

This bill is not only morally unsound, but fiscally irresponsible, and I urge my colleagues to vote "no" for the GOP repeal bill.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Andrew Chaney, First and Calvary Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Missouri, offered the following prayer:

God, You are never far, but the busyness of each day makes You feel distant. Inner barricades block Your guidance—fears haunt us, worries entangle our minds, and pressures cast shadows upon our hearts. Keep these anxieties of life from overwhelming us.

Give us victory over pride so that our common humanity may provoke new inroads of compassion to sympathize more deeply with those in need.

Give us victory over stubbornness. Replace the grudges that hinder our collaboration with forgiveness that opens minds to new possibilities.

Give us victory from the stain of lustful sins. Keep us on the straight and narrow path. Cleanse and purify our hearts by the inspiration of Your holy spirit.

O God, give these Members of Congress a courageous perseverance, an unshakeable integrity, a spirit that cannot be broken. Secure the faith of this House, thereby securing the heritage and the future of America.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RUIZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. ANDREW CHANEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LONG) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, today I have the honor of introducing my friend Reverend Dr. Andrew Chaney.

Reverend Chaney is a third-generation minister. He serves as the senior minister at the historic First and Calvary Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Missouri, a church that is a special place to my family. Reverend Chaney serves as an important spiritual voice for me and the Springfield community.

Congress has a longstanding tradition of beginning each session with a prayer. I am privileged and honored to have the opportunity today to welcome Reverend Dr. Andrew Chaney to the people's House as he opened today's session with a prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CLIMATE CHANGE

(Ms. STEFANIK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, my district is the proud home to Adirondack Park, an environmental treasure. We understand in the north country that protecting our environment plays an important role in promoting economic growth and opportunity.

Along with 16 of my colleagues, I am proud to introduce a resolution calling on the House of Representatives to commit to working on economically viable solutions that address the threat of climate change.

Clean energy innovation is critical, and this resolution brings together the priority of addressing the risks of climate change with the importance of protecting and creating American jobs. This resolution calls on American ingenuity, innovation, and exceptionalism, also citing that it is a conservative principle to protect, conserve, and be good stewards of our environment.

No matter what side of the aisle you are on, we all have a significant responsibility to protect our environment from avoidable damage. I ask my colleagues to join in this commitment and support this important resolution.

RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced a resolution of inquiry requesting that the President and Attorney General provide the House with any evidence in their possession relating to President Trump's claims that President Obama illegally ordered the wiretapping of Trump Tower, a task not welcomed but necessitated by the President's seemingly baseless accusations that the Obama administration wiretapped Trump Tower during the Presidential campaign. These accusations should be taken literally and seriously.

As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I have seen absolutely no evidence that supports the President's claims. President Trump and the Department of Justice have a responsibility to completely clarify the President's statement on Twitter.

If the White House and Department of Justice are unable to produce this evidence, as I suspect will be the case, the President owes the American people a thorough and immediate explanation and apology.

LET'S TAKE CARE OF OUR VETERANS

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the VA Accountability First Act. This legislation provides the VA's Secretary with increased ability to remove, demote, or suspend any VA employee for poor performance or misconduct.

Why it takes legislation to enforce common sense is beyond me. Just like in the business world, the VA and its employees must be held accountable for their actions.

Three weeks ago, I hosted a veterans townhall in Swainsboro, Georgia. Many of the complaints and concerns shared with me were about wait times. One thing no one has enough of is time, especially our veterans. For far too long, veterans have waited for care at their own expense. This is unacceptable.

It is our responsibility to not only take care of, but provide the best possible care to our servicemen and -women. Getting rid of bad and incompetent actors is a great place to start.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation. It is truly the least we can do for those who have done so much for us.

WHAT WILL AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT MEAN?

(Mr. RUIZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, the American Health Care Act, known as TrumpCare, will cause 24 million more people to go without health insurance over the next decade.

As an emergency physician, I know that everyone, even healthy young people, are vulnerable to car accidents or diseases that require critical care. Whether they have insurance or not, people get sick and get injured.

I have never treated a patient who said they were uninsured because they preferred to be uninsured. They simply couldn't afford it.

So what does 24 million more uninsured people mean?

It means more pain, suffering, and shorter life spans for people who go without care.

It means more ER visits and a longer wait to see a doctor in the emergency rooms for everyone.

It means financial ruin for young families or those ready to retire.

It means that hospitals and providers might lay off workers or even go out of business due to rising uncompensated care. It means they will charge more to make ends meet, which will raise premiums and out-of-pocket costs for everyone. Everyone will have to pay more.

I urge everyone to vote "no."

HOUSE REPUBLICANS FULFILL PROMISE

(Mr. WILSON of SOUTH CAROLINA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, an editorial last week in the Post and Courier of Charleston cites "GOP health bill a start," which provided accurate insight into how the American Health Care Act is the first step in a three-step approach on how to put patients back in control of health care.

The editorial states: "Any flaws notwithstanding, it's an important step forward for the GOP to put a fully fleshed-out healthcare bill on the table. . . . But there is certainly cause for optimism that a tweaked . . . healthcare bill can at least bandage and begin to cure some of the festering wounds left by ObamaCare. . . ."

"Republicans have a chance to make things right. They have a chance to help more Americans afford health care in a sustainable and responsible way. They have the chance to place more healthcare decisions in the hands of patients and doctors and fewer in the hands of government."

"The bill introduced on Tuesday is a first step in the right direction. . . ."

I appreciate the positive vision of Speaker PAUL RYAN with President Donald Trump and his team of OMB Director Mick Mulvaney and HHS Secretary Tom Price.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism to defeat Islamic extremist terrorists.

DEFEAT TRUMPCARE

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 24 million Americans will lose their health insurance. They will become uninsured. We call it TrumpCare, as it should be called.

For 7 years, Republicans have said they have a better alternative to the Affordable Care Act. President Trump promised on the campaign trail that Republicans would put forward a plan that would have insurance for everybody which would be far less expensive and far better for the American people.

We now know the Congressional Budget Office report says that 24 million people will lose their health insurance, including 7 million who will lose their insurance they currently have through their employers.

Older Americans waiting to get on Medicare would be charged five times what they pay now. It reduces the Medicare trust fund, and it cuts 25 percent in Medicaid, a program that provides care for children and senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, this plan is both heartless and financially unsound. This repeal bill does not lower premiums or out-of-pocket costs nor does it expand access to care, and it provides a huge tax cut poorly disguised as a healthcare bill.

We need to defeat this bill.

THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF CRIMEA

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week marks 3 years since Russia violated Ukraine's territorial integrity and illegally stole Crimea.

In 2014, the people of Ukraine peacefully decided to move closer to the European Union and away from the Russian sphere of influence. However, the Napoleon of Siberia would have none of it. Russian troops invaded the Crimean Peninsula of Ukraine. Little green men then invaded two more regions in eastern Ukraine.

The Russian invasions have cost 10,000 Ukrainian lives, but Russia has not stopped. Troops are pursuing a slow strategy to take more and more territory in eastern Ukraine.

Russia has invaded a sovereign country and taken over its lands. Mr. Speaker, what country is next?

The American people must stand with Ukraine and against the tyranny of the Russian bear. It is time to stand up to Putin. He must pay a price for his aggression. Sanctions against and isolation of the bear are good places to start.

And that is just the way it is.

A CALL FOR HEARINGS TO DETERMINE ROOT CAUSE OF WAVE OF HATE CRIMES

(Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)